GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:572
ANSWERED ON:05.05.2000
LINKING OF ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR IN WTO
RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether America has attempted to link environment and labour laws with the foreign trade under the WTO agreement reached in Seattle;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a follow up meeting was recently held in Geneva;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the measures taken by the Government to safeguard the national interests against the pressure being exerted by the developed countries in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

(SHRI MURASOLI MARAN)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN THE REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.572 ANSWER ON 5.5.2000 REGARDING LINKING OF ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR IN WTO

(a) & (b) USA had made proposals for further strengthening of the trade environment linkage in WTO rules as well as for discussions for introducing a linkage between trade and core labour standards during the Third Ministerial Conference of WTO at Seattle, USA from 30th November to 3rd December 1999. No decisions were taken at the Conference, as it was inconclusive.

(c) & (d) The General Council of WTO has held various informal and formal meetings with a view to evolve a broad consensus on the future work programme of WTO. The focus of these meetings has not been particularly on the issues of environment and core labour standards.

(e) India has been consistently taking a stand against the enlargement of the environmental window in the WTO as a protectionist measure and against any attempts to link trade with core labour standards in bilateral discussions with USA as well as in WTO.